

EMERGENCY TRANSFER PLAN FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, OR STALKING, FORM HUD-5381
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Attachment: Certification form HUD-5383

Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA)

**Emergency Transfer Plan for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual
Assault, or Stalking
Public Housing Program**

Emergency Transfers

The PCHA is concerned about the safety of its tenants, and such concern extends to tenants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. In accordance with the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA),¹ the PCHA allows tenants who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to request an emergency transfer from the tenant's current unit to another unit. The ability to request a transfer is available regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.² The ability of the PCHA to honor such request for tenants currently receiving assistance, however, may depend upon a preliminary determination that the tenant is or has been a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and on whether the PCHA has another dwelling unit that is available and is safe to offer the tenant for temporary or more permanent occupancy.

This plan identifies tenants who are eligible for an emergency transfer, the documentation needed to request an emergency transfer, confidentiality protections, how an emergency transfer may occur, and guidance to tenants on safety and security. This plan is based on a model emergency transfer plan published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the federal agency that oversees that the public housing and housing choice voucher (HCV) programs are in compliance with VAWA.

Eligibility for Emergency Transfers

A tenant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, as provided in HUD's regulations at 24 CFR part 5, subpart L, is eligible for an emergency transfer, if the tenant reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if the tenant remains within the same unit. If the tenant is a victim of sexual assault, the tenant may also be eligible to transfer if the sexual assault occurred on the premises within the 90-calendar-day period preceding a request for an emergency transfer.

¹Despite the name of this law, VAWA protection is available to all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

²Housing providers cannot discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic, including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, or age. HUD-assisted and HUD-insured housing must be made available to all otherwise eligible individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

A tenant requesting an emergency transfer must expressly request the transfer in accordance with the procedures described in this plan.

Tenants who are not in good standing may still request an emergency transfer if they meet the eligibility requirements in this section.

Emergency Transfer Request Documentation

To request an emergency transfer, the tenant shall notify the PCHA's management office and submit a written request for a transfer to **any PCHA office**. The PCHA will provide reasonable accommodations to this policy for individuals with disabilities. The tenant's written request for an emergency transfer should include either:

1. A statement expressing that the tenant reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if the tenant were to remain in the same dwelling unit assisted under the PCHA's program; OR
2. A statement that the tenant was a sexual assault victim and that the sexual assault occurred on the premises during the 90-calendar-day period preceding the tenant's request for an emergency transfer.

Confidentiality

The PCHA will keep confidential any information that the tenant submits in requesting an emergency transfer, and information about the emergency transfer, unless the tenant gives the PCHA written permission to release the information on a time-limited basis, or disclosure of the information is required by law or required for use in an eviction proceeding or hearing regarding termination of assistance from the covered program. This includes keeping confidential the new location of the dwelling unit of the tenant, if one is provided, from the person or persons that committed an act of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking against the tenant. See the Notice of Occupancy Rights under the Violence against Women Act for All Tenants for more information about the PCHA's responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of information related to incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Emergency Transfer Timing and Availability

The PCHA cannot guarantee that a transfer request will be approved or how long it will take to process a transfer request. The PCHA will, however, act as quickly as possible to move a tenant who is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking to another unit, subject to availability and safety of a unit. If a tenant reasonably believes a proposed transfer would not be safe, the tenant may request a transfer to a different unit. If a unit is available, the transferred tenant must agree to abide by the terms and conditions that govern occupancy in the unit to which the tenant has been transferred. The PCHA may be unable to transfer a tenant to a particular unit if the tenant has not or cannot establish eligibility for that unit.

If the PCHA has no safe and available units for which a tenant who needs an emergency transfer is eligible, the PCHA will assist the tenant in identifying other housing providers who may have safe and available units to which the tenant could move. At the tenant's request, the PCHA will also assist tenants in contacting the local organizations offering assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking that are attached to this plan.

Emergency Transfers: Public Housing (PH) Program

If you are a public housing resident and request an emergency transfer as described in this plan, the PCHA will attempt to assist you in moving to a safe unit quickly. The PCHA will make exceptions as required to policies restricting moves.

Emergency transfers for which you are not required to apply for assistance include the following:

- Public housing unit in a different development
- Public housing unit in the same development, if you determine that the unit is safe

At your request, the PCHA will refer you to organizations that may be able to further assist you.

You may also request an emergency transfer to the following programs for which you are required to apply for assistance:

- HCV tenant-based program
- HCV project-based assistance
- Other programs administered by the PCHA (such as state housing programs)

Emergency transfers will not take priority over waiting list admissions for these types of assistance. At your request, the PCHA will refer you to organizations that may be able to further assist you.

Safety and Security of Tenants

Pending processing of the transfer and the actual transfer, if it is approved and occurs, the tenant is urged to take all reasonable precautions to be safe.

Tenants who are or have been victims of domestic violence are encouraged to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233, or a local domestic violence shelter, for assistance in creating a safety plan. For persons with hearing impairments, that hotline can be accessed by calling 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

Tenants who have been victims of sexual assault may call the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network's National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE, or visit the online hotline at <https://ohl.rainn.org/online/>.

Tenants who are or have been victims of stalking seeking help may visit the National Center for Victims of Crime's Stalking Resource Center at <https://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center>.

Additional Local Organizations:

The following local organizations offer assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

For help regarding sexual assault, you may contact 24 Hour Rape Crisis Hot Line at (727) 530-RAPE (7273) or the Abuse Hotline at (800) 962-2873.

Victims of stalking seeking help may contact Community Action Stops Abuse (CASA) 24/7 Hotline: (727) 895-4912, TTY/TDD: (727) 828-1269, 24/7 online chat: www.CASAPinellas.org/chat, Website: www.casapinellas.org, Fax: (727) 821-7101, or Hope Villages of America – The Haven 24/7 Hotline: (727) 442-4128, TTY/TTD: (727) 446-2148, Fax: (727) 461-4702, Website: hopevillagesofamerica.org

Bay Area Legal Services provides free civil legal services to low-income residents residing in Pinellas County who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. To apply for services call (800) 625-2257 or apply online at <https://bals.org/>